

The Athenian Mercury :

Tuesday, April 7. 1691.

Quest. 1. **W**Hether they are not Enemies to the Government, that lay Wagers that Mons is, or will be taken by the French King.

Ans. I am very unwilling to pass a rash Censure upon so many at once, though I doubt not but this Government has a far greater number of Enemies in it, and such as instead of hazarding Guineas, won't stick at the hazard of their Necks : For the sake of the last I will for once turn Querist, and ask whether, if according to their wishes, the French King attaining his Ends, he would enquire whose Conscience has been tender in taking the Oaths, who amongst the English stood firm to his—and King *Jame's* Interest? or whether his designs would not rather center in his own Greatness and Pride, equally treating *Williamite* and *Jacobite*? To the other I would propose this Question? Whether if they had a Father to be try'd for his Life, they would lay Wagers that he would be hang'd? and if by so doing they would not be thought unnatural? and whether there is not a resemblance between a private Family and a Body politick; and what may be the Application. If they are unwilling to understand it, I ask further, Whether he that lays Wagers had rather win or lose? 'Tis Nonsense to pretend the last, and if they say the first, they silently confess the Resolution of the Question must bear an Affirmative.

Quest. 2. Whether Alexander or Julius Cæsar were the greater Man?

Ans. We may do well to consider them as Men or Generals. The greatest Conquest is that over our selves, as to Ambition, Revenge or Love. For Ambition they might be pretty even, but Cæsar at least conceal'd the weakness of his Mind better than the other; he never cry'd because he cou'd not conquer other Worlds, nor desire to be a God in this. For Revenge Alexander on the least pique would kill his best Friends; Cæsar very often forgave his worst Enemies. As for Love, the Grecian by his carriage towards Darius's Wives and Daughters is indeed worthy of Eternal Honour, and seems to me to deserve greater Trophys than for his Conquering the World—whereas the Roman has in this point but a very indifferent Character. Thus for Women, but as for Men, Cæsar I esteem much the greater Conqueror. One fought with effeminate Persians; or at worst, the wild Scythians and Indians, who had very little of the Art of War; the other with Gauls and Romans, and even with the great Pompey, who had been used to conquer Kings, and from whom after so hard a tug, he ravish'd the Empire of the World. On the whole, the Judgment of other men is and will be free, but mine is clearly for the latter against the former. I shall only add, as Hannibal did to Scipio, when he askt him whom he thought the greatest Generals that ever were, after he had named Alexander, Cæsar, and

himself, being askt what he would have said had he conquered Scipio too; he replied, that then he should have esteemed himself greater than both. I say I shall only add, that if a certain Prince in the World now in Arms for the Liberties of Europe, has but that Success in the ensuing Campaign, which both his Prudence and Valour deserves, as we han't much reason to doubt it; future Ages will without any Flattery think him greater than all three together.

Quest. 3. Whether it is lawful for two unmarried Persons, each consenting, to cohabit, &c. since Marriage was a thing set up by Man?

Ans. Marriage as to the Essential part of it, was first constituted in Paradise: And as Man was endued with Reason, so the external ceremonial parts were first left to his Discretion: But when the World came to be Peopled, and Governments fixt, care was taken for the Establishing Laws, and amongst the rest a settled publick Solemnization of Marriages—it being a Contradiction that Government could be happy and at Peace without a certain Method and Way was established for Legitimacy of Succession in Estates, &c. 'Tis true in the Law of God we find not the least footsteps of any set Cerimonial Nuptials, or other Marriages, than a continued Cohabitation and its Consequences, but silence is no certain Argument that there was none, those that consult History will find it universally agreed upon, (as if nature dictated it) that all Nations had a certain publick manner of solemnizing their Marriages. And though our Eminent Lawyers lay down no other fundamental Act of Marriage than bed and board for a Legitimacy of Succession: Yet this alters not the Nature of Politicks, nor frees these Clandestine Aggressors of the Civil ends of Government, from the Scandal and Infamy that a National Custom charges them with, nor the Impiety they are guilty of by being an offence to tender and unsatisfied Consciences, which every honest man would avoid; that has learnt this great Truth, that no Man is born for himself.

Quest. 4. What shall a Man do that has been well Educated, and has not sufficient business to maintain him, as he has been always used to live?

Ans. A Man that has had the happiness of a good Education, cannot be ignorant what he is most capable of, and then I dare not pretend a Suffrage contrary to the wisest of Men in such a Case, viz. Whatever thou findest thy hand to do, do it with all thy might. But here is a Caution necessary to be premised, That he whose Genius is towards the Law, engages not in Mechanicks, the Plowman in Mathematicks, or the Physician in Politicks, and so of the rest, but that every Man content himself with such a Lott as he is qualified for, if he does not, 'tis a double injury to the Publick, in depriving it of that Service he could do it; and hindering another (more fit for his place)

place) from performing that Service which should be done to it. This digression is not altogether foreign, and may be of some use; but to the Question, which supposes a Younger Brother, or a Person of like Education. In such a case we lay down this position, That every Individual of the Creation (man especially) is espous'd at the Commencement of their Existence into the Oeconomy of Providence, and seems to challenge the particular Care of the Great Creator for convenient Subsistence; so that no Person that does not wilfully forfeit his dependency can have a real Cause to complain of want. If it be alledged that their condition is but mean, and they believe other persons less qualified are better prefer'd: We answer, Providence is the best Judge of that, who tho he takes care of every particular person, yet disposes of things for a General Good; those that cannot get an Estate according to their Mind, may and ought to get a Mind agreeable to their Estate; I have not a mind to engage in Disputes, or I would challenge the whole World to show me who is the happier, a Rich or a Poor contented Man, that has occasion to use his all, and this to use his little: Our Advice is, Improve little opportunities, and greater will offer themselves as naturally as an increase of Vertue and Vice follow an habit. *Humility and Modesty are the way to greatness and respect.*

Quest. 5. What two Numbers are those that the 1/3 of one, is equal to 1/3 of the other?

Ans. 50. and 42. For the 1/3 of 50. is 16 2/3. and the 1/3 of 42 is 14. now $5 \times 7 = 35$. and $7 \times 5 = 35$.

Quest. 6. Whether ill desires may not be guest at in a Woman by an indecent Habit?

Ans. The Soul, Mind, or what else you are pleased to call it (for it wants a true Definition) acts by the ministration of the Passions, the Passions by the Senses, and the Senses by external Objects—If the object represented by the Senses to the Understanding is misconceived, or does not carry a true notion along with it, there is no other medium of Information, for the Will wills what the Understanding conceives, and the Affections choose according to the Will, and so pass into Action; this being premis'd, the Question is not difficult, our Words and Actions being the ordinary Index of our Minds; therefore an immodest Attire shews the levity of the Mind, a dress above ones Quality, Pride; and so of the rest, though all sorts of Habits may possibly come under some reserve, and unknown Circumstances may even in a manner change matter of Fact: as for Example, It is not repugnant to Vertue or common Prudence for me, having but 20 l. to lay it all out in a Suit of Cloaths, where there is a great probability of such a Preferment as is not consistent with a meaner Dress; and where I may be serviceable for the future to my Country; when a labouring man worth but 20 l. that has a Family, and is unfit for any other Imploy, cannot do it without Sin and Folly; and so in other cases of the like Nature, but generally the Rule holds for the Question to be taken in the Affirmative.

Quest. 7. Suppose Lazarus had an Estate, and bequeathed it to his Friends, whether ought he or the Legatees to enjoy it after he was rais'd from the Dead?

Ans. The Querist ought to have added whether he meant according to the Jewish or British Law, but we suppose he meant the last. Our learned Civilians distinguish death into two sorts, viz. a Natural and a Civil Death. The first every body knows without the advice of Counsel, therefore no need to trouble the Enquirer with its Definition. There are several sorts of Civil deaths, or Cases, wherein Persons may be said to be dead in Law as to Titles in Estates, &c. Vide Cook upon Littleton, Lib. 2. Cap. 11. but this sort of death could no ways concern Lazarus, being personally dead, or reputed so: Therefore the Question is, Whether he was dead or no, and if dead, whether upon his reviving, he had a just Title to the same Estate he had before his decease. We are not without many strange Examples of Persons that have lain two or three dayes as if they were dead, and yet have revived; and of others that have been buried before they were really dead, to give an Example would be too tedious, and impertinent since there is no body almost but what is satisfied in this truth. But as to Lazarus his Case, when our Saviour spake first to his Disciples about his Death, he told 'em, *Our Friend Lazarus sleepeth*, which seems to import something like what we have mentioned, and his Disciples themselves did not understand he meant a Natural death, as appears by their Answer, *If he sleeps he shall do well*; but afterward he told 'em plainly, *Lazarus is dead*, which is full to the matter in hand, and agrees with that saying of Martha, *by this time he stinketh, having been dead four days*; possibly out of respect to the Miracle Lazarus might have his Estate restor'd him again, but he could not claim it by any Title he had, for tho, he was the same Lazarus, yet his Right and Interest to that Estate which was once his own, was founded upon the same Law and terms as the rest of the Jews, and all other mortals hold theirs, viz. till death, and that he was dead, we have the warrant of the forecited Authorities.

Quest. 8. What is the Reason that a drop of Glass being broken at the lesser end flies into dust?

Ans. This tear or drop of Glass, as some will have it, is owing to the Invention of Holland, and has past thro' all the Universities of Europe, baffling the Curiosities of the greatest Virtuoso's and Philosophers that have studied the Nature and Violence of its fraction. Robaut in his Physical Tractate offers the most plausible Account of it that I can meet with, nor is Hobbs silent in his Essay upon this wonderful Phenomena. We shall premise as necessary to this Explanation the Custom of Glass Houses, that thereby we may be better able to judge of the Nature of vitreal Bodies. When they have form'd their Vessels they remove them for the space of six hours by little and little from the fire to the distance of eight or ten foot, whereby the pores are insensibly contracted, and the Spirit or more subtile matter of fire is by degrees exhausted, when as if the Vessel should immediately be removed into the Cold, the strife betwixt the igneous matter with the Colder Element generally causes an immediate fraction of the Vessel, especially if the Body of heat is so great as to be near an equal Match with that of Cold, but where it is little it has not that Effect, as in the instance of this drop made by falling from molten hot Glass into a vessel of water: This binds up the fire, closes the porousness of the Superficies, and reduces it to be so brittle, that nothing can be said to be more, even to the next degree of a voluntary breaking asunder. The reason why it appears so full of bubbles and pores in the thickest part of it, is because the heat carries the longest there, the nature of which is to bubble up and dilate liquid Bodies. Now being thus brittle as above mentioned, it follows, that the motion caus'd by breaking the smaller end of the drop sets on work those igneous particles which were unnaturally pent up in the Bubbles or hollow parts of the Body, which now exerts with so great a violence that activity which the water hindred and bound up as in a prison. Besides, I might have added the incredible Motion and force that the breaking the small end has upon the whole body, as appears by striking a Tobacco-pipe (which is not so brittle) where the force and violence of the stroke equally affects the whole Pipe in the same Moment, and usually causes a fracture in another place sooner than where the stroke fell: For further satisfaction, consult the Opinion of the Royal Society in this matter.

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Next Saturday Morning shall be discuss'd (at large) that Grand Disputable Question, *Whether brute Creatures have any sort of knowledge like to ours, and whether or no a Raven can speak?* Occasion'd (as the Querist says) by an Account lately sent him, of ONE that utter'd several Expressions; the Truth whereof (he tells us) is confirmed by the present Minister of Wigmore, and attested under the Licenses own hand.